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Mr. Willison's answer to such detraction merits the serious attention of all who are interested in Canadian politics. Himself a man of principle, he sees in Sir Wilfrid Laurier a spirit of kindred views and sympathies. "I have always proclaimed," says Laurier, "and again I repeat, that in politics I belong to the British Liberal school, to the school of Fox and Gladstone. In religion I belong to the school of Montalembert and Lacordaire, of the men who were the greatest perhaps of their age in loftiness of character and ability of thought." The social questions, which come to the surface so frequently in English politics, play a small part in the public life of Canada, and there is no close correspondence between the policy of Canadian Liberals and that of English Liberals as represented, for example, by the Newcastle programme. Yet a sentimental bond exists and, in the eyes of Mr. Willison, Sir Wilfrid Laurier is a true disciple of Fox and Gladstone. The reference to Montalembert and Lacordaire is equally important, for the Quebec *Rouge* who has stood up against ultramontanism is dear to Mr. Willison. If we had more space, we should gladly discuss in detail some of the points which are raised by this biography. As it is, we can only indicate the author's point of view. Mr. Willison is candid, well-informed, thoughtful, and he gives those of us who are Conservatives some nuts to crack. These two volumes are the best *Apologia* for the Liberal party in Canada which has yet appeared.

CHARLES W. COLBY.

*Letters of Lord Acton to Mary Gladstone.* Edited, with an introductory memoir, by HERBERT PAUL. (New York: The Macmillan Company; London: George Allen. 1904. Pp. 353.)

LORD ACTON'S personal influence reached comparatively few persons during his life, but those few were the best, and through them he influenced indirectly many who were scarcely aware of his name. The publication of some of his essays and of these letters must serve to fix his public reputation. Fortunately, he will not be remembered merely as the most learned Englishman of his time, for enough of his writings will be printed to explain why, although he never achieved the *magnum opus* he had planned — "The History of Liberty" — he deserves to rank among the foremost historical scholars England has produced.

This volume of letters written by him between 1879 and 1886 to Miss Mary Gladstone, now Mrs. Drew, has three serious claims on the attention of students of history. In the first place, these letters throw light on much of the political situation in England during those years. Lord Acton was a Gladstonian almost to idolatry, and to Gladstone's daughter he wrote without reserve criticisms of men and measures, suggestions, and advice, which she submitted to the prime minister; and it is no secret that Gladstone esteemed Acton so highly that, had the latter desired, he might have held important political office. But his true function was that of a critic at once devoted and yet unprejudiced, who

had not only unrivaled stores of political knowledge but also an almost unmatched cosmopolitan experience and acquaintance to draw from. He knew the political and intellectual leaders of Paris and Rome, of Munich, Vienna, and Berlin, not less well than those of London; and so his criticism is free from that insularity which few Englishmen can escape from.

Next in importance to the historical student are the dicta scattered through the letters on the writing and study of history, on the merits and defects of historians, and on the final object of any writing of history whatsoever. Lord Acton's opinion of Macaulay, for instance, may well give pause to our Teutomaniacs, who would have us believe that patience, a pair of spectacles, a pitchfork, and longevity constitute all the equipment required by a historian. But Acton did not spare Macaulay's defects, nor S. R. Gardiner's (whom he found "not well informed in religious history"), and he could say nothing better of Carlyle than that "he had historic grasp — which is a rare quality — some sympathy with things that are not evident, and a vague, fluctuating notion of the work of impersonal forces." But more valuable than any individual opinions is the temper in which Lord Acton writes, the temper in which the greatest historians from Thucydides to Gibbon and Mommsen have always worked, and which does not confound lack of enthusiasm with impartiality.

Finally, many of Lord Acton's verdicts on historical personages or parties or causes will have to be taken into account by future writers and students. His remarkable analysis of Beaconsfield, his comparison of Gladstone with earlier British statesmen, his references to Burke, his remarks on democracy, his denunciation of ultramontanism and of the Jesuits, his impassioned defense of liberty, are among the treasures of these letters. No liberal, whether Protestant or agnostic, has ever written a stronger indictment against the papacy than is written by this unwavering Roman Catholic. "The principle of the Inquisition is murderous," he says, "and a man's opinion of the papacy is regulated and determined by his opinion about the religious assassination. . . . If he accepts the Primacy with confidence, admiration, unconditional obedience, he must have made terms with murder" (p. 299). Lord Acton's delight in theological study shows itself on every page — indeed, that interest was for him the corner-stone of history. His fairness toward believers of other creeds sprang not so much from a fine courtesy as from his unquenchable thirst for the truth. To a reader whose convictions cannot be expressed in stereotyped phrases there is something almost humorous in the picture which Lord Acton unconsciously reveals of himself and Gladstone and men like them lying awake in anxiety lest Canon Liddon or Lightfoot or Temple or some other Anglican dignitary might be undergoing a doubt as to the precise meaning of this or that word in one of the Thirty-nine Articles. Imagine the President of the United States solicitous lest the Bishop of Oklahoma should fall into heresy, or an eminent historian feeling justified in guaranteeing that though the said bishop used incense, he would not go over to Rome!

It is matters of this kind that stamp Lord Acton's mind as English, in spite of his mixed descent.

There are, besides these prominent traits in the book, many references to literature, including a long criticism of *John Inglesant* and repeated eulogies of George Eliot, for whose genius Lord Acton had almost boundless admiration. It is noticeable that this man, who had read almost everything in history, theology, and economics, seems never to have examined the great scientific discoveries of his generation, with their cosmic implications. Mr. Herbert Paul contributes a better biographical sketch than his recent shallow and slovenly work on *Matthew Arnold* might lead one to expect.

WILLIAM R. THAYER.

Of the seven papers published in the *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, New Series, Vol. XVII. (London, 1903, pp. xxxiv, 400), by far the most interesting and valuable, as far as the constituency of THE AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW is concerned, is the presidential address of Dr. G. W. Prothero. Its theme is the proposed bibliography of English history; and it gives a definite form to a scheme which has been discussed since 1885, when Mr. H. R. Tedder, for thirty years librarian of the Athenæum Club, read before the Library Association a paper entitled "Proposals for a Bibliography of National History". Dr. Prothero shows that notwithstanding the work done by Mr. James Bass Mullinger and Dr. Charles Gross, England is still without a bibliography of British history at once adequate and general. Mr. Mullinger's *Introduction to the Study of English History*, admirable as it is, does not pretend to be complete; while Dr. Gross's *The Sources and Literature of English History from the Earliest Times to about 1485*, almost perfect so far as it goes, does not extend beyond the middle ages. The main lines of Dr. Prothero's plan are: the bibliography must include (1) manuscripts; (2) pamphlets, essays, magazine articles, speeches, lectures, and the transactions of societies; (3) biographies and autobiographies; (4) historical novels and plays; and (5) the books of foreign writers on British history, foreign lives of British statesmen, foreign books on British foreign policy, and on the British constitution and municipal government, whether they are translated or not. Dr. Gross has covered the ground down to the end of the middle ages with such fullness and accuracy that English historical scholars have only to rest and be thankful that the work is done and done so well. This fact, however, only makes it more incumbent on them to take up the work where Dr. Gross stops, and endeavor to produce a bibliography of subsequent British history worthy to stand alongside his work. Dr. Prothero accordingly proposes that the bibliography shall begin in 1485, and be carried to the end of the reign of Queen Victoria. England and Wales, Scotland, and Ireland are to be included; as are the American colonies, down to 1776; India from the first charter in 1600; Canada from 1763; South Africa from 1795; and Australasia and all the other colonies since the beginning of